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XV.—TWO NOTES ON THE *HISTORIA REGUM
BRITANNIAE* OF GEOFFREY OF
MONMOUTH.

I.

THE VERSIONS OF THE *HISTORIA*.

Despite Mr. Ward's thoroughness in his discussion of Geoffrey's *Historia*,¹ further consideration throws at least grave doubt on one of his fundamental theories, the theory,² namely, that Geoffrey published more than one distinct edition of the *Historia*.

Ward argued largely from the fact that the abstract³ of Geoffrey's book made and addressed to the otherwise unknown Warinus by Henry of Huntingdon, from the copy which he found in 1139 at the Abbey of Bec, differs in many

¹ *Cat. of Romances*, I, 207 ff. Ward's conclusions have been for the most part accepted without question; though Geoffrey's latest student, Professor W. L. Jones, differs on one or two points, in his article entitled *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, in *Trans. of the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion* for 1899, pp. 1 ff.; also separately reprinted, London, 1900.

² See especially pp. 209 ff.

³ Published in the Rolls Series Edition (ed. Howlett) of the Chronicle of Robt. de Torigny in *Chron. of Stephen*, etc., IV, 65 ff.

respects from the *Historia* as it appears in existing MSS. The variations, however, may all be satisfactorily explained without assuming more than one version.

Ward himself suggests that we can account for most of them on the supposition that Henry merely took notes at Bec, which he afterwards expanded when he had leisure. This certainly disposes of such peculiarities as Henry's calling Uter the son instead of the brother of Aurelius, and of many others of the minor differences; while most of the rest are only the natural result of condensation. Such changes as the addition of the statement that Brennus (Geoffrey, or his scribe, writes *Brennius*) conquered Greece and Asia, are doubtless due to Henry's knowledge of history, real or supposed; and his observation that Belinus won all the lands about Britain, and his allusion to the Britons' expectation of Arthur's return, are merely testimonies, parallel to one or two which can be found in his own *Historia Anglorum*,¹ to his knowledge of certain British traditions. The two principal additions—namely, the dramatic description of the opposition offered by the giants to the landing of Brutus and his people, and that of the last battle of Arthur—may easily be due to Henry's own imagination, as Ward says, and as anyone will be convinced who will compare the last part of the first and the beginning of the second book of Henry's *Historia Anglorum*² with Nennius, Bede, and the Saxon Chronicle, and observe how freely he has there treated his sources.

Ward lays chief stress on Henry's omission from his abstract of all mention of Merlin and the story of Vortiger's tower, an omission hardly explicable, Ward maintains, on the supposition that the work from which Henry copied assigned any such importance to Merlin as does the existing

¹ For example, his account of Helena, the mother of Constantine (bk. i, ch. 37). See Arnold's introduction in his edition of Henry's *Historia Anglorum* in the Rolls Ser., p. liv.

² Especially bk. ii, ch. 2 ff.

version of Geoffrey's *Historia*. This inference, however, can be shown to be erroneous. After the first three books, Geoffrey's *Historia* covers ground which Henry himself had previously treated in his *Historia Anglorum*, and Henry has the latter constantly in mind while making his abstract, and tries to be consistent with it. Several times in the abstract, when speaking of the events of the Roman period, he breaks off short with the observation, "Of this I have spoken in my *History of the Angles*" (or "elsewhere"), and he rejects Geoffrey's genealogy of the family of Cassibellaunus¹ for that which he had given in his history. Now, in compiling the latter, he had seen fit to reject Nennius' account of the boy Ambrosius and Vortiger's tower,² and there was no reason why he should adopt it from Geoffrey when Geoffrey had merely expanded it³ and identified Ambrosius with Merlin.⁴

After the explanation of these points, no one, certainly, will be inclined to attach any importance, as did Ward, to the fact that Henry quotes only a part of the Latin poetry which Geoffrey (i, 11) ascribes to Brutus and Diana.

Henry's letter, then, affords no evidence that Geoffrey's *Historia* ever existed in a form essentially different from that which we now possess. The only other very considerable argument to that effect has been based upon the Bern ms. of the *Historia*. At most, this ms. has never been held to represent an edition nearly so unlike the existing one as that which Ward postulated for the original of Henry's abstract, but the idea that it stands for a different edition at all must, I believe, be abandoned, at least for purposes of argument. Professor Jones writes me that he is inclined to modify his

¹ Geoffrey, iii, 20.

² Nennius, sec. 40 ff.

³ Though the expansion is very great.

⁴ By a similar exercise of judicious skepticism, Henry omitted from his history Nennius' story of the massacre of the Britons by the Saxons (the "Long Knives" affair, Nennius, sec. 46); and in his abstract he condenses into two lines the seven pages of Geoffrey's account of Maximus (Geoffrey writes *Maximianus*) and Conan (v, 9-16), and into not very much greater space the narrative of Arthur's reign after the defeat of the Saxons (ix, 5-xi, 1).

views about the MS. as expressed in his article; and its variations from the other MSS., which are said to occur largely in the case of proper names, seem, I judge, to be no greater than may be charged to the scribe, who may perhaps have been a Welshman. Certainly, whatever may be true of the dedication, if the MS. itself be supposed to represent a version different from the standard one, it must be earlier (since its Latinity is less polished¹); but Professor Jones tells me that it includes in the prophecies the "Vae tibi, Neustria" sentence,² which Ward³ showed to be a late interpolation.⁴

As to minor differences in the various MSS. (for instance, in the book and chapter divisions⁵), no one has ever shown that they cannot perfectly well be due to the scribes, or, in any case, that they are of enough consequence to indicate any regular revision of the text.⁶

The other arguments for more than one edition being out of the way, it should seem that no one can well continue to question the correctness of Ward's judgment⁷ in interpreting Geoffrey's statements (whose truth there is certainly no reason to doubt) in book vii, chapters 1 and 2, as meaning

¹ Jones, p. 19.

² Bk. vii, ch. 3 of the standard form, lines 73-75 of San Marte's ed.

³ Pp. 208-9.

⁴ It is doubtless theoretically possible that the scribe followed in the main an early copy and inserted this sentence from a later one; but that cannot be assumed without stronger reasons than any that have been shown.

⁵ See Hardy's account of the MSS. of the *Historia*, in his *Catalogue of Materials* (Rolls Ser.), vol. i, part 1, pp. 341 ff.

⁶ It may be noted that Ward, taking the hint from the erroneous argument of Wright (*Biog. Lit. Brit., Anglo-Norm. Period*, pp. 143-4) which he disproved (p. 213), argued that since Geoffrey speaks of Bishop Alexander in the past tense (vii, 1) the "final" edition of the *Historia* must have been prepared after the spring of 1148, when the bishop died. But so far as has ever been stated all the MSS. agree in using the past tense here (Professor Jones tells me that this is true of the Bern MS.), and it is evident that the fact may be explained on various theories other than that of a later edition.

⁷ G. Paris assumes without discussion the same opinion as Ward, in *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xxx, 4.

that he published in an independent form, before the rest of the *Historia*, the prophecies which in the MSS. represented by the printed editions make up the bulk of the seventh book. Geoffrey says directly:¹ “Nondum autem ad hunc locum historiae perveneram, cum de Merlino divulgato rumore, compellebant me undique contemporanei mei ipsius prophetias edere.”

Indeed, Ward's view seems to me sufficiently demonstrated by the external evidence afforded by Ordericus Vitalis in his excerpt² (discussed by Ward) from Geoffrey's account of the scene introductory to the prophecies and from the prophecies themselves. That Ordericus was quoting not from Geoffrey's complete *Historia*, but from an independent edition of the prophecies such as Ward supposes appears because:

1. He says that he is drawing “de libello Merlini,” and Geoffrey's decidedly extended *Historia* could not be called a “libellus,” nor is Merlin one of its chief characters.

2. Not only, in order to give the connection, does Ordericus speak of Merlin as having been contemporary with St. Germanus, and summarize the doings of the latter evidently from Bede's account (i, 17–21); but he refers his readers for further information “de casibus Britonum” to “Gildas Brito” (evidently meaning Nennius, since he goes on to speak of Arthur's twelve battles) and Bede. If Ordericus had had Geoffrey's complete *Historia* at hand, even in an early and less expanded form, he certainly would not have mentioned these much briefer accounts, or at least he would have named Geoffrey also.

3. Moreover, in all probability, if Ordericus had known the complete *Historia*, he would not have refrained from making some further use of it.³

¹ San Marte's ed., p. 92.

² Bk. xii, ch. 47; in Le Prévost's edition, vol. iv, p. 486.

³ Though the fact that he brings in his reference out of chronological order (it really belongs in book i, vol. i, pp. 107–113) shows that he did not become acquainted with the prophecies until his work was approaching completion.

That the "Libellus Merlini" from which Ordericus copied was composed earlier than Geoffrey's *Historia* can at least be shown to be very probable, for other reasons. Geoffrey merely appropriated and made over from Nennius (sec. 42) the story of the dragon fight which he used in the *Historia*,¹ and evidently also in the "Libellus Merlini," as the introduction to Merlin's prophecies. Now, while Ordericus' quotation from the prophecies themselves corresponds verbatim with the form in Geoffrey's *Historia*, and while Ordericus' account of the dragon fight agrees in various details, verbal or other, with Geoffrey as against Nennius, yet in other details it agrees with Nennius as against Geoffrey. In the two most significant of the latter cases—viz.: (1) the substitution of "fundamentum" for "pavimentum," "duos concavos lapides" for "duo vasa," and the omission of the "tentorium complicatum,"² and (2) the modification of the statements which give or seem to give the final outcome of the battle—Geoffrey's version is either better than the others from an artistic point of view or else more politic.³

Thus there seems to be no sufficient reason to doubt that Ordericus did what we should expect, namely, for the most part followed closely enough the text of Geoffrey's independent edition of the prophecies,⁴ which, again as we should expect, must have been more nearly like Nennius than is Geoffrey's later version; so that Geoffrey must have made

¹ Bk. vi, ch. 19, lines 8 ff., of San Marte's edition.

² Cf. Ward, p. 207.

³ To indicate the other agreements and differences between the respective accounts seems not worth while, since it would require the quotation of all three entire, and the further variations are not individually significant.

⁴ Merely adding to Nennius' allegorical explanations one as to the meaning of the "vasa" (which, however, may have been made by Geoffrey in his original version) and introducing the change stated below (note, p. 467).

alterations when he came to insert the prophecies in the *Historia*.¹

I am not aware that any one but Le Prévost has called attention to a sentence in this passage of Ordericus which sets the later limit for the publication of the independent

¹ Mention ought to be made of one somewhat puzzling point in Ordericus' account. At the end of his excerpt from the prophecies, he says that those will easily be able to interpret Merlin's words who are familiar with history and know what things happened to Hengist and Catigern, Pascent and Arthur, Adelbert and Edwin, etc. All these names, with those which follow, Ordericus might easily have taken from Bede and Nennius, except that of Pascent; but the latter is not noticed by Bede nor made sufficiently prominent either by Nennius (sec. 48) or by Geoffrey in his *Historia* (see index to San Marte's edition) to explain why he should be mentioned with Arthur; and Ordericus' choice of names seems to have no particular relation with the prophecies. It is just possible, though I think not probable, that the introduction which (as Ward suggests) Geoffrey must certainly have furnished to the independent edition of the prophecies, may have had more to say of Pascent than the *Historia* has.

Here I may add another to the explanations which Ward suggested for Ordericus' change (I assume that it was made by Ordericus) in the allegorical significance of the dragons, by which he inappropriately makes the red typify the Saxons and the white the Britons, instead of the reverse. Ordericus, unlike Nennius (who is not altogether clear, though he pretty certainly means the same as Ordericus), but very possibly following the original statement of Geoffrey (which may have been incautiously patriotic and perhaps intended to be still prophetic in the twelfth century), says categorically that the red dragon defeated the other; and of course that would seem to anyone but a Welshman to be historically true only if the red was equated with the Saxons. So Ordericus may have made the change for that reason. (Ordericus says: "Tandem rubeus vicit, et album usque ad marginem stagni fugavit." Nennius: "Tandem infirmior videbatur vermis rufus, et postea fortior albo fuit et extra finem tentorii expulit; tunc alter alterum secutus trans stagnum est, et tentorium evanuit." Geoffrey in the *Historia*: "Praevalebat autem albus draco, rubeumque usque ad lacus extremitatem fugabat. At ille . . . impetum fecit in album, ipsumque retro ire coëgit. Ipsi ergo in hunc modum pugnantibus, praecepit rex"—and here Geoffrey passes to the prophecies.) Possibly also the idea of the fantastic ecclesiastical explanation which Ordericus gives immediately after for the meaning of the whiteness of the Britons, occurred to his mind before he made the change in colors.

edition of the prophecies.¹ The last of the princes whom Ordericus mentions as furnishing proof of the inspiration of Merlin's prophecies are Henry and Griffith (Henry I. of England and Gruffydd ab Cynan of Wales), "qui," Ordericus goes on, "dubia sub sorte adhuc imminetia praestolantur, quae sibi divinitus ineffabili dispositione ordinantur." Gruffydd lived until 1137,² but Henry died on December 1, 1135, so that Ordericus must have written the passage before the end of that year, and Geoffrey must have published the prophecies still earlier. If we could assume that the dedication to Stephen and Robert of Gloucester in the Bern ms., which dedication cannot have been written before April, 1136,³ is earlier than that addressed to Gloucester alone which is found in all the other mss., we should thus have another indication that the prophecies were published before the *Historia* as a whole; but there is no real proof that the usual dedication was not the earlier⁴ and that of the Bern ms. temporarily substituted for it sometime between April, 1136, and the spring of 1137 (or possibly May, 1138).

The most reasonable theory about the composition of Geoffrey's *Historia* seems to me, therefore, to be as follows: Somewhere about 1135 Geoffrey was engaged on the work when, as he says, Bishop Alexander and others persuaded him to stop and publish the prophecies of Merlin; which he did, evidently not much later than about the middle of 1135.⁵ He naturally provided the prophecies with a setting, which

¹ Le Prévost's general theory (see his edition of Ordericus, vol. iv, pp. 487, note 2, 491, note 3, and 493, note 4) of the relation of Ordericus' account of the prophecies with Geoffrey's was overthrown by Ward (pp. 208-9), and his discussion appears to have been neglected in consequence.

² Rhys and Jones, *Welsh People*, p. 307.

³ See Madden in *Archæological Journal*, xv, 299-312, followed by Ward, p. 213, and by Jones, p. 16.

⁴ Madden points out some reasons for supposing that the usual dedication was at least written earlier.

⁵ And perhaps not much earlier, since there is no reason to suppose that he long delayed putting forth the *Historia* after the appearance of the prophecies, and no proof that it was published before 1136.

treated at least of the story of the dragon fight at Vortiger's tower (adapted from Nennius). After this he went on and completed the *Historia*, into which he incorporated the prophecies with some changes in the setting. Unless the Stephen-Gloucester dedication of the Bern MS. was the first to be used, he temporarily substituted it for the other sometime in 1136-8. At any rate, it cannot have been long in circulation before he permanently replaced it by the other. There is no proof that he ever made any regular revision of the *Historia*, and the variations in the MSS. may well be due to scribes.

II.

THE STORY OF BELINUS AND BRENNIUS.

For a long time¹ it has been well understood that Geoffrey's *Historia* is very largely a compilation,—that he put it together out of material furnished by various historians, traditions, and other sources; in fact, out of pretty much everything that he knew and could conveniently use.² It is evident also that Geoffrey exhibited great originality and brilliancy in the com-

¹ Especially since the publication of San Marte's edition of the *Historia*, in 1854. See also, for example: Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, p. 118, etc., and *passim* in *Hibbert Lectures on Celtic Heathendom* and *Studies in the Arthurian Legend*; Madden in notes to his edition of Layamon; Bieling, *Zu den Sagen von Gog und Magog*, Berlin, 1882; Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse*, I, 185-8 (German trans. by Brenner, *Studien über die Entstehung der nord. Götter- u. Heldensagen*, pp. 192-6); Sayce in *Y Cymmrodor*, x, 207-221; F. Lot, *Rom.*, xxvii, 1-54; Schofield in an article on Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* in the current volume of *Publications of Mod. Lang. Assoc.* (I do not mean to imply that I accept all the theories set forth in these discussions).

² I expect to discuss rather fully Geoffrey's sources and method for a part of his work in a treatment of the "Arthurian Material in the English Chronicles." I may note here an oversight of Heeger in his monograph, *Die Trojanersage der Britten*, pp. 66 ff., where, in suggesting that Geoffrey took ideas for his account of Brutus' wars in Greece (bk. i) from the events of the struggle between Stephen and Matilda, he forgot that the events happened after the publication of the *Historia*.

bination and application of these materials. One of the best illustrations of these facts is afforded by his account of Belinus and Brennius (iii, 1-10).

The first glance shows the connection of these figures with the Belis and Brans of Aryan and Celtic mythology and tradition,¹ and the Brennus made known to us by the Roman historians. San Marte, moreover, suggested a plausible explanation for the procedure of Geoffrey (or of tradition before him) in representing Belinus and Brennius as brothers and associating them together in the conquest of Rome on the basis of a passage in Livy, while the fact of the division of their army into two parts and the subsequent course of Geoffrey's narrative naturally remind one of the much later campaign of the Cimbri and Teutones. All this, however, does not account for Geoffrey's story of the brothers' early wars against each other for the possession of Britain. Comparison makes it almost certain that for that story Geoffrey drew from the actual history of the relations between Harold and Tostig, the sons of the Saxon Earl Godwin.

The substance of what Geoffrey says is this: that on the death of the king their father, Belinus and Brennius fought for the island, but at last divided it, Brennius, the younger, receiving Northumbria, and Belinus the southern part, with the supremacy. Later, on the advice of his counsellors, Brennius determined to renew hostilities, went to Norway, and got the help of its king. After a love episode, he made his way to Britain with an army, was defeated by Belinus—who, hearing of Brennius' proceedings, had already seized his territory—and escaped to Gaul. Becoming king of the Allobroges, he engaged in another expedition against Britain, and here the parallel ceases.

The story of the historical Harold and Tostig is as follows: Their father was not king, but he was almost

¹ Cf. on this and the following points San Marte's edition of Geoffrey's *Historia*, pp. 232-242. Here cf. also Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 90, 238, 245, 274, 666.

more than a subject, and after his death Harold practically ruled England; Tostig, younger than Harold, was Earl of Northumbria. They were both turbulent characters enough, and according to a report which, though doubtless false,¹ was current in Geoffrey's time,² Tostig early committed hostile acts against Harold, which led to a feud between them. In consequence of Tostig's cruelties, his people rose against him; Harold, going to restore order, finally abetted their act in deposing him, and Tostig fled to Flanders. This was in 1065. The next year, after Harold had assumed the crown, Tostig resolved on war, and came with a fleet to the Humber. Driven away by Earl Edwin, he proceeded to Scotland, where he found King Harold of Norway. With him he made alliance, and together they invaded England, where, after defeating Edwin and Morcar, they were overthrown and slain by Harold at Stamford Bridge.

The resemblance of this series of events to Geoffrey's narrative is still closer, in some respects, if one follows the version of Ordericus Vitalis,³ which represents all the trouble between Harold and Tostig as occurring after the former had become king, and says that it was in consequence of a determination on Tostig's part to fight Harold that the latter deprived him of his earldom.

Of course, in any form, the history does not fit Geoffrey's tale with absolute exactness. Geoffrey, for instance, makes the flight of Brennius to the continent later than his union with the king of Norway. But the important features, though differently arranged, are for the most part the same in both cases—the quarrel between the brothers; the location of the younger, who was not king, in Northumbria; his alliance with the Norwegian monarch, invasions of England

¹ So Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, note GG, 2d edition, pp. 652 ff., also 379.

² Represented, for example, by Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia*, vi, 25, Rolls ed., Arnold, p. 197. For the history see also Wm. Malmes., ii, 200, and *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ann. 1065 and 1066.

³ Bk. iii, chaps. 11 and 14, written in 1123, according to Delisle's *Notice* in Le Prévost's edition of Ordericus, vol. v, pp. xlvi and xlviii.

(of which Tostig, like Geoffrey's Brennius, practically made two), and flight across the channel.¹ It is hardly possible that Geoffrey should have written his story only seventy years after the occurrence of a series of events so similar without having it in mind. As to the differences, Geoffrey, being a clever literary artist, was bound to make some changes, and he had, also, to connect this narrative with that of the brothers' continental campaign.

It looks also as if Geoffrey were influenced more indirectly by another detail of the history; for his account of the attack of Guichtlacus, King of Denmark, on Brennius, when the latter is going to fight Belinus, reminds one strongly, *mutatis personis*, of the attack of Tostig and the Norwegian Harold on Harold of England when the latter was in danger from William of Normandy. It is as if Geoffrey were economical of his materials and worked in all of the original that he could, in one way or another.²

¹ It ought to be noted that a few chapters earlier Geoffrey had already given a brief outline sketch of some of the main features of the story of Belinus and Brennius, applying it to Cunedagius and Marganus, who are represented as cousins (ii, 15, lines 13-25). Here we have the division of the kingdom, the stirring up of the younger (who again has Northumbria) by counsellors, his attack, flight, and, in this case, death. But this is only one of a considerable number of parallelisms which may be observed between various incidents in Geoffrey's history. Compare, for example, the stories of the two Leirs (bk. ii, chaps. 9 and 11); Belinus' gate (iii, 10) and Cadwallo's brazen equestrian statue (xii, 13) with the story (adopted from Nennius, 44) of the burial of Vortimer's bones; the mediation of Genuissa (iv, 16) with that of Conwenna (iii, 7); the descent of both Guanhumara (ix, 9, 11) and the mother of Ambrosius and Uther (vi, 5) "*ex nobili Romanorum genere*"; the disposal by assassination (books vi and viii) of Constantinus, Constans, Vortimer, Aurelius, and Uther, who are all successive, except that Vortiger's reign intervenes, while Geoffrey seldom employs assassination in other parts of his history.

² Very likely Geoffrey made use elsewhere of a part of the story of Harold and Tostig, as the suggestion for the invasion of Britain by King Humber (ii, 1 and 2), who landed and was defeated on the river which therefore, says Geoffrey, bears his name. This seems the more likely because Henry of Huntingdon emphasizes the fact that Tostig's army was driven across the Humber, while Geoffrey says that many of the Hunnish king's men were drowned in it.

It is quite possible that in assigning the cause of Brennius' renewal of hostilities against Belinus, Geoffrey was influenced by an historical fact of a few years after Harold's time; for the courtiers of Prince Robert of Normandy are said¹ to have stirred him up to rebel against his father on the same pretext which Geoffrey ascribes to those of Brennius, namely, that the subjection in which he was kept was unworthy of him.

But Geoffrey's narrative seems to be still more composite. For San Marte has pointed out² that in the love episode of Brennius it presents similarities with the stories of the *Wilkinasaga* and of Hilda and Gudrun, and that Guichtlacus is a figure from Northern history and tradition. Moreover, the remark that Brennius as ruler of the Allobroges arranged with the Gauls for unmolested passage in his expedition against Britain, reminds one of what Cæsar says³ of the Helvetii,—that they expected either to persuade or to compel the Allobroges to the same passive assistance.⁴

If the hypotheses above presented are well-founded, in Geoffrey's narrative of Belinus and Brennius he has brought together (though perhaps, to be sure, with some help from antecedent traditions) motives or suggestions from: two ancient figures of Celtic mythology, the accounts of two critical periods in Roman history, another well-known event as described by a Roman historian, a most dramatic story from English history of the century before his own, a minor event from English history of a few years later, and very likely two or three Teutonic sagas.

It is hardly necessary to add that one who admits the presence of all or many of these elements need not hold that

¹ So Ordericus Vitalis, v, 10, ed. Le Prévost, vol. II, p. 377. The date of this book is 1127, according to Delisle in *Notice*, vol. v, pp. xlvii, xlviii.

² Pp. 232-3.

³ B. G., i, 6.

⁴ Geoffrey's account, also, of the hanging of the Roman hostages in revenge for the faithlessness of their parents (chap. 9) was evidently suggested by actual events of the same kind, with many of which he must have been familiar.

Geoffrey selected (or even used) them all by a conscious process. Some of them had doubtless passed into his general stock of ideas, as is true of plots and situations in the case of every reader and writer, so that he drew upon them spontaneously without any very definite thought of their source.¹

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July, 1901.

¹ I may add that this section on Belinus and Brennius contains an instance which San Marte overlooked of Geoffrey's borrowing from Gildas, viz.: iii, 10, 20, "quantam nec retro aetas nec subsequens consecuta fuisse perhibetur." Cf. Gildas, 21.